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INFLUENCE OF EBIONISM ON THE LIFE OF JESUS

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Lawrence Webster Pratt

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INFLUENCE OF EBIONISM ON THE LIFE OF JESUS.

E. Early Christianity.

F. Jesus.

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INFLUENCE OF EBIONISM ON THE LIFE OF JESUS.

INTRODUCTION.

Early Judaism gradually formulated its followers into sects or schools. By the middle of the second century before Christ three such sects were in existence. They were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. The New Testament tells us to some extent of the first two. It also gives us something of the attitude of Jesus toward these sects. When we come to consider the latter sect, the Essenes, we find no mention at all made of them in the New Testament nor in Rabbinical literature. In order to know their teaching, practices, and influence upon Judaism and Christianity it is necessary for us to search other literature. "Their mode of life is described by Jewish, Christian, and pagan writers." * The best and most accurate among these are the works of Philo, Josephus, and Pliny.

For our source of information regarding the Essenes in this study we will depend upon these and

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*Moffatt, James, "Essenes" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.V, p 396.

especially the two former. Philo was a contemporary and Josephus spent three years in the Essene neighborhood. They each wrote in a direct and explicit way, "although liable to qualifying criticism on the score of tendency." * We estimate the order from the indispensable material they give us, but in many places it is far from adequate.

Origen tells us that "the Jews who accepted Christ are called Ebionites." ** In seeking to find the relation of the Ebionites to Judaism, we find that authorities agree that to some extent at least they are connected with the Essenes. "All authorities combine in asserting a close connection between the Ebionites and the Essenes. ------ The Essenes in all their varieties seem to have come over to Christianity on the fall of the Jewish state and the retreat of the church to Pella. When they joined the believers in their exile the Parsee elements began a ferment in the church and Ebionism was one of the Products." ***

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* Moffatt, James, "Essenes" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. V, p 396.

** Uhlhorn, G., "Ebionites" in Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. II, p 684.

*** Thomas, J.E.H., "Ebionism" in International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol.II, p 893.

"There can be little doubt that the influences incorporated in the form of Ebionism we are considering came through Essenism." * In this study the writer will use the term, Essenes, for this sect up to the time of the Fall of Jerusalem and from that time on the term, Ebionites, although the terms are really interchangeable so far as our purpose leads us.

For the scope of this study the people of the world may be classified religiously by the following outline: **

A. Gentiles.

1. Non-Christian.

Heathenism.

2. Christian.

Merging in Christian Church about 138.

B. Jews.

1. Christian.

(a) Non-heretical or Judaeo-Christianity.

(1) Merging in Christian Church about 138.

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* Beveridge, W., "Ebionism" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.V, p 143.

** Cf. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, article on "Ebionism" by Beveridge, W., p 141.

(b) Heretical.

(1) Nazarenes.

Those who accepted supernatural birth of Jesus, with undeveloped Christology.

(2) Pharisaic Ebionites.

Those who accepted the messiahship of Jesus, denied the Virgin Birth, and hated St. Paul.

(3) Essenes or gnostic Ebionites.

Those who became gnosticized.

2. Non-Christian Judaism.

This sect with which we must deal is clearly shown to be one of the heretical Jewish sects with a gnostic tendency or tendencies.

The writer will limit his discussion to practices, teachings and mode of living of the Essenes and to those teachings, practices and that portion of Jesus' life which are said to be either in harmony with or directly opposed to them.

The first section will set forth in a general way the origin of the Essenes and their general habits and practices. They were a very seclusive

sect and lived unto themselves in order to attain purity. They considered, that purity could be attained only through strict observance of the Mosaic Law and in many instances they even went beyond the Law itself.

In seeking to find to what extent Jesus may have been influenced by the Essenes (or Ebionites) we will approach the question from two angles: first, the seeking of direct historical evidence of close intercourse between the two; and secondly, seeking the resemblance of doctrine and practice, which are so striking as to suggest such a connection.

The former angle will be studied in section two. Direct historical evidence will be sought through John the Baptist, the fore-runner and heralder of Jesus; and through James, the brother of Jesus, who was the leader of the early Church.

The latter angle will be treated in the third section of this paper. Close unity in the doctrines and teachings of the Essenes with those of Jesus will be set forth; and then their striking

differences. At the close of this section some general conclusions will be drawn.

Finally, the entire paper will be briefly summarized and brought to a close.

ORIGIN AND PRACTICE OF THE ESSENES.

Origin of the Essenes.

The Essenes are first mentioned by Philo and Josephus. They probably coined the word to meet a need in their writings for the Greeks. Phariseeism and Sadduceeism came into existence about the middle of the second century before Christ, and it is thought that Essenism came into being at approximately the same time or perhaps a little later, for "At the time when Christ appeared on earth, Judaism was divided into three religious parties, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes." * According to Hippolytus, the Essenes "practiced a more devotional life, being filled with mutual love, and being temperate." **

As has been stated, the Bible and Rabbinical literature are both silent in regard to the Essenes, It is therefore necessary to go to other sources. For information regarding them, Philo, Josephus, and Pliny are considered the most authentic.

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* Uhlhorn, G., "Essenes" in Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. II, p 760.

** Hippolytus, The Refutation of all Heresies, Vol. I, p 352.

The name Essene has given scholars much difficulty. Many derivations have been proposed. Among these we find that it has been connected with "puritan, or the retiring or the servant (of God); others, again, find the root in to heal or to bathe." * Philo connected it with the Greek word "holy"; Epiphanius defines it as meaning "the stout race"; Josephus as "the high Priests breast-plate". More often it is considered to mean "seer or the silent". "The name is especially applied to a remarkable pre-Christian order of Jewish monks." **

Practices of the Essenes.

Moral excellence was becoming more and more obscure during the centuries just before Christ. In speaking of this Philo tells us that there were in Judea about four thousand people called Essenes, who were pre-eminently worshiping servants of God. They did not put their trust in the sacrifice of animals, as the other Jews did, but in the keeping of their minds in a saintly frame. They shunned town-life, because of the lowness of manners of town people, and lived mainly in villages; although societies of them

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* Westcott, B.F., "Essenes" in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol.I, p 772.

** Moffatt, James, "Essenes" in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.V, p 396.

were found in many if not all of the cities. They had no families as they did not marry and, as Pliny tells us, there were no children or "scare-bearded lads" among their sect. Their society was kept up by adopting children of others and by those who joined the sect on probation which took a period of three years before full connection was received.

They despised wealth. This is clearly and emphatically shown by their habits of living together in a common house or colony; holding all property in common; each working and placing his income in a common treasury. "They are almost the only people who remain destitute of money and possessions, by use and want rather than by any lack of prosperity; yet they are esteemed wealthy, for ----to be frugal and contented is ---- ample abundance." * As individuals, none of them owned any private property, no house, farm, cattle or clothes. As a society they owned all these, and by depositing all together each was benefited of all in common. They dwelt together in one place and spent their entire time in the managing of every kind of

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* Philo, "Quod Omnis Probus Liber" # 12, Moffatt, James, "Essenes" in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.V, p 396.

business which is consonant with peace and were thereby beneficial to themselves and their neighbors. As soon as they received their wages they gave them to the appointed steward who immediately purchased the provisions and supplies which are necessary to man's life. One kind of food set before them day after day satisfied their hunger. They were also content to have common raiment; in winter thick coats and in summer cheap tunics. "Their robe and its shape are modest. And they do not own two cloaks, or a double set of shoes; and when those that are now in present use become antiquated, then they adopt others. And they neither buy nor sell anything at all; but whatever any one has he gives to him that has not, and that which one has not he receives." * The feeble, old, and sick were cared for by the society and its entire resources.

They considered logic as unnecessary for the acquiring of virtue, physical science too lofty for human nature, ethics the important gift of the Divine. They studied the rules and laws of ethics, especially those dealing with the seventh day and the end of time.

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* Hippolytus, The Refutation of all Heresies, translated by J.H. Macmahon, Vol.I, p 353.

The seventh day was considered sacred and on it no work was to be done, instead they repaired to the synagogues "where they sit arranged according to age ---- the young below the older persons ---- and listen with due order and attention," * while one read and another explained some part of their sacred books. They had above all else "three rules or standards, namely: the love of God, the love of virtue, and the love of man". ** They regarded the Deity as the cause of all good but of no evil, so in their love for him they maintained purity of life and abstinence from falsehoods and oaths. Their love for virtue was shown in their freedom from the love of money, fame, and pleasure,and in their place were simplicity, good humor, modesty, regard for laws and firmness of character. They showed their love for man in goodwill, impartiality and fellowship.

They never spoke of profane affairs before sunrise but spent this time in some ancestral prayers. At sunrise the managers dismissed them to their various tasks, at which for the most part they were exceedingly skillful, where they worked until the fifth hour. At this time they gathered at one place, clothed themselves

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* Philo, "Quod Omnis Probus Liber", § 12, Moffatt,James, "Essenes" in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. V, p 396.

** Ibid, p 396.

in linen veils, took a cold bath, assembled into their private room, outsiders being excluded, sat at the common table quietly and sacredly. Loaves and plates with the one food, but never anything which had life, were set before them, of which they ate after the Priest offered prayer which he did again at the close of the meal, before they laid aside their veils to return to their tasks. In the evening they returned and sat down with any strangers who happened to be present.

In all else they acted at the bidding of the managers, but in charity they were free to act as they saw fit. They were free to give food and shelter to the needy. They took exceptional pains to select from stones and plants those things that are good for the body. Thus they had cures for many ailments and were looked to by many as a society of healers. This ability to cure led them to a more extensive use of magic for which they are well known.

Members found guilty of heinous sins were expelled. They often perished, for they were under bond of oath and habit not to eat food handled by other people. Out of compassion, they were sometimes taken back just before they would otherwise have perished.

They are extremely strict and just in inflicting penalties. Sentence was passed by a court of at least one-hundred, and their decisions were irrevocable. They always obeyed their elders and the majority of their society. Their membership was divided into four classes, according to length of service. These classes are similar to the caste system of India. If a Junior touched a Senior, the Senior washed as if he had been sullied by contact with a foreigner.

They were long lived, many lived to be one-hundred years of age. They could not be forced to blaspheme their legislator or to eat forbidden food, even though racked and twisted, burnt and mutilated, and tortured as they were during the Roman wars. During many of these wars savage and brutal men massacred and tore to pieces human beings. "Yet none of these bloodthirsty creatures, none of these treacherous and cunning tyrants, was able to lay any charge against the company of Essenes, or holy men. Their moral excellence triumphed and everybody treated them as independent and free by nature, praising their common meals and their indescribable good fellowship ---- the clearest proof of a life which is perfect and exceedingly happy." *

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* Philo, "Quod Probus Liber", # 13, Moffatt James, "Essenes" in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. V, p 397.

They believed the body to be corruptible and of transient material, but the soul to be permanent and immortal. "Now the doctrine of the resurrection has also derived support among (the Essenes); for they acknowledge both that the flesh will rise again, and that it will be immortal, in the same manner as the soul is already imperishable. (And they maintain) that the soul, when separated in the present life (from the body, departs) into one place, which is well ventilated and lightsome, (where), they say, (the soul) rests until judgment." * In their worship they were simple and diligent, never offering any animal sacrifices. They believed their three principles of love to be sufficient sacrifice. They revered the lawgiver, Moses, next after God. If anyone blasphemed in his name they were punished with death.

They never married"because woman is immoderately selfish and jealous, and terribly clever in decoying a man's moral inclinations, and bringing them into subjection by continual cajoleries. ---- Should she have children she is filled with pride and boldness of speech and what she formerly used to hint under the

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* Hippolytus, The Refutation of all Heresies, Vol. I, pp 358-359.

disguise of irony, all this she now speaks out with great audacity and shamelessly compels him to practices, every one of which is hostile to community life."* Any man ensnared by a wife, or compelled to make children his first care was a slave and not a free man. As their society was made up of free men, therefore, there could be no marriages.

They lived in no single city but large numbers of them might be found in every city. Everything they possessed was freely put at the disposal of any fellow-member from another community who might arrive. Thus a traveler entered the house of people he had never seen and used it as though they were his closest friends. When they traveled they carried arms for protection from robbers, but they never carried anything else. Whatever one might have need of he could get, whether clothing, food or care, from anyone of the Essenes he chose and without the promise to repay.

John McClintock and James Strong tell us that the Essenes like the Pharisees: had four classes of Levitical purity; regarded ten persons as constituting

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* Plino, Apology for the Jews, excerpted in Eus Praep. ev. viii II, Moffatt, James, "Essenes" in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. V, p 397.

a complete number for worship; never spat in the presence of an assembly nor on the right side; considered their social meal a sacrament; always bathed before meals; put an apron on the lower part of the body while bathing; bathed after performing the duties of nature; took no oaths; would not remove as much as a vessel on the Sabbath; had a steward to care for needy strangers; believed authority comes from God and God only; kept an applicant for admission on probation for twelve months, giving him an apron the first year; delivered the theosophical books and the sacred names to the members of their society. *

Some writers think that their obscurity as a distinct body is explained in that they represented originally a tendency rather than an organization, communities coming out of the result of their practice. "Of the silence of the New Testament regarding the Essenes there are only two possible explanations. One is that Christianity is one with Essenism; ---- The other is that Essenism was so uninfluential, so entirely out of relation to Christianity, or any active movement of the time that there was no occasion to mention it.

* cf Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol.III, p 303.

When we remember that Pliny knows of Essenes only as inhabiting the desert shore of the Dead Sea, we are confirmed in choosing this alternative."* If we had proof for the statement that Christianity is one with Essenism our position would be secure, but not a single proof is to be found. Neither can we hold that it was so obscure as to be uninfluential, for the Essenes existed in most if not all the communities and in common society. "Not only was a gate of Jerusalem named from them, but a later tradition mentions the existence of a congregation there which devoted one-third of the day to study, one-third to prayer, and one-third to labor." **

The very character of Essenism prevented its spread to any extent out of Palestine. For at other places Levitical purity was impossible as the very land was impure. So we find it only in Palestine amongst the Jews and probably the early Christians. Although it had influence on many others for even the most cruel and deceitful tyrants, Philo tells us, that had been the scourge of the country, had been moved to admiration by their quiet and invincible freedom, their common meals, and their consummate fellowship, Even Herod befriended and honored them.

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* Niven, W.D., "Essenes" in Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, Vol. I, p 368.
** Westcott, B.F., "Essenes" in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol.I, p 772.

ESSENISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

Some writers call Essenism to their aid in explaining any distinctive features of Christianity, which they are unable to explain in any other way. Some have even gone so far as to say that the Founder of Christianity may have been an Essene and that, at the best, Christianity was largely influenced by Essenism for its doctrinal and ethical teachings. Dequincey makes an attempt to prove that the Essenes were actually Christians. Graetz tells us that Christianity is "Essenism intermingled with foreign elements".* Ginsburg writes, "It can hardly be doubted that our Saviour himself belongs to this holy brotherhood. ---- Jesus who in all things conformed to the Jewish law, and who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, would therefore naturally associate Himself with the order of Judaism which was most congenial to His nature." **

In seeking proof for these dogmatic statements we come at once to a negative argument. The silence of the New Testament in regard to the Essenes, while it so

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* Graetz, H., History of the Jews, Vol. II, p 142.

** Lightfoot, J.B., The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, 397,396.

unsparingly denounces the vices of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, is no proof that Jesus belonged to that sect as has been so emphatically claimed. This silence of the New Testament may as easily be explained by the comparative insignificance of this sect, and the lack of any contact with them. "The whole subject of Essenism is wrapped in obscurity; the Essenes remain and will remain, the 'great enigma of Jewish history'. The obscurity is all the more tantalizing because we know enough to perceive that for history of religion the Essenes are of surpassing interest and importance. In them the western world saw for the first time a monastic Order and a sacramental worship".* As the Sadducees, who held the highest offices in the hierarchy, are mentioned only three times in the Gospels, we can hardly expect to find any mention of the Essenes, since they were so little known.

"As no stress therefore can be laid on the argument from silence, any hypothesis of connexion between Essenism and Christianity must make good its claims by establishing one or both of these two points: first, that there is direct historical evidence of close

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* Niven, W.D., "Essenes" in Dictionary of Apostolic Church, Vol.I, p 369.

intercourse between the two; and secondly, that the resemblances of doctrine and practice are so striking as to oblige, or at least to warrant, the belief in such a connexion. If both these lines of argument fail, the case must be considered to have broken down."*

The Gospel narrative gives us no evidence and not even the slightest hint of any connection between Essenism and Christianity. Jesus and his disciples moved about freely at all times. They took part in the common business and in the common recreations of the Jews. John, the Baptist, and James, the Lord's brother, have been singled out as having links of communication with the Essenes and also holding important places in the Gospel narrative or the Apostolic Church. If such be the facts we will have a close union between Jesus and the sect, as John was the herald of the Kingdom and James was the most prominent person in the early Church of Jerusalem.

John the Baptist.

The New Testament tells us that John came from the wilderness, dressed in garments made of camel's

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*Lightfoot, J.B., The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p 399.

hair held in by a leather girdle. His food was dried locusts and wild honey. Rabbinical literature makes no reference to him. From his ascetic-nature, desert abode, rough clothes, sparse food and practice of baptism, Josephus at once connects him with the Essenes. He says John was "a good man who exhorted the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to justice towards one another and piety towards God, and to come to baptism. For baptism would be acceptable to God thus, if they used it, not for the pardon of certain sins, but for the purification of the body, provided that the soul had been thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness." *
In speaking of his own life, Josephus says: "When I was informed that a certain Bannos lived in the desert, who used no other clothing than grew on trees, and had no other food than what grew of its own accord, and bathed himself in cold water frequently, both by day and by night in order to preserve purity, I became a follower of his."**
The first chapter of Mark shows John to be similar although not identical with this. Because of this similarity it is quite untenable to attempt, as many are now tending to do, to dissociate John altogether from Essenism." ***

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* Abrahams, I., Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, p 30.
** Ibid, p 34.
*** Ibid, p 34.

"It was from the Essenes that for the first time the cry went forth, 'The Messiah is coming! The Kingdom of heaven is near!' He who first raised his voice in the desert little thought it would re-echo far away over land and sea, and that it would be answered by the nations of the earth flocking together round the banner of a Messiah. In announcing the kingdom of heaven, he only meant to invite sinners among the Judaean people to penitence and reformation. The Essene who sent forth this call to the Israelites was John the Baptist. ---- He led the same life as the Essenes. ---- John appears to have fully entertained the belief, that if only the whole Judaean nation would bathe in the river Jordan, acknowledge their sins, and adopt the strict rules of the Essenes, the promised Messianic time could be no longer deferred. He therefore called upon the people to come and receive baptism in the Jordan, to confess and renounce their sins, and thus prepare for the advent of the kingdom of heaven."* Jülicher takes a stronger position on John's Essenic connection when he says:"He led them (his followers) to the Jordan, there to give them as representatives

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* Graetz, H., History of the Jews, Vol. II, pp 145-146.

of a regenerate people the final purification which attests the reality of their inward change. ------ No other exegesis seems reasonable; Josephus, ---- sanctions it. The true baptism is spiritual (Psalms 51:7(9)). But it needs an outward symbol, and Johanan (John), remembering Ezekiel 36:25, and having prophetic authority, called those who would know themselves to be purified to baptism. It is no doubt true that baptism was regularly required of Gentile proselytes, but Johanan's baptism had no connection with ceremonial uncleanness."*

All students agree that John was an ascetic,and the Essenes were ascetics, but of "John himself no traits are handed down which suggest that he was a member of the Essene community." ** The Essenes "had common property, common meals, common hours of labor and prayer."*** John lived a solitary independent life. It is even doubtful if the Essenes would permit his food of locusts as they ate nothing which had life. The Essenes wore a white robe and John wore only cloth of camel hair and a leather girdle. "His baptism as narrated by the Evangelists, and their

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*Jülicher, A., "Essenes" in Encyclopaedia Biblica, Vol.II, column 2499.

** Lightfoot, J.B., The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p 401.

*** Ibid, p 400.

lustrations as described by Josephus, have nothing in common except the use of water for a religious purpose."*

John may have learned from the Essenes many things. "The simplicity of his teaching of repentance and the disregard of ceremonial in his preaching separate him from these monks, John may have known his desert companions, may have appreciated some things in their discipline, but he remained independent of their guidance."** John's baptism "was more than a sign of repentance, it was a confession of loyalty to the kingdom which John's successor was to establish. It had thus a two-fold significance: (a) confession of and turning from the old life of sin, and (b) consecration to the coming kingdom."*** He "treats baptism as a bodily purification corresponding to an inward change, not as a means of remitting sins." **** The Essenes bath was oft-repeated while John's baptism was a rite of far deeper religious significance. The Essenes' cleanliness was perscribed by the mosaic law; whereas John's baptism was considered as a ceremony of consecration for the coming kingdom.

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*Lightfoot, J.B., The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p 400.
** Rhees, R., The Life of Jesus of Nazareth, pp 73,74.
*** Ibid, p 77.
**** Abrahams, I., Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, p 34.

Only a few men were accepted by the Essenes even after they had proven and tested them during a year's period of probation. John, however, summoned all alike to baptism. "Essenes lived apart in desert places and abjured the work-a-day outside world; they looked for the coming of the Messiah apart from any efforts of theirs."* While on the other hand, John gathered together large numbers and taught them to "bring nearer" the coming of the Messiah. The Essenes did not mix in political matters except to prophecy the future and took no sword until the great revolt; but John, as a preacher and reprover, rose up against Antipas.

~~Then~~ Thus the claims of Graetz that John was in his life altogether after the Essene pattern and that he baptised his converts into the Essene order can hardly be held as positive facts. "If positive statements are allowable, it would be more true to fact to say that he could not possibly have been an Essene. The rule of his life was isolation; the principle of theirs, community."**

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*Klausner, J., Jesus of Nazareth, p 245.

** Lightfoot, J.B., The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p 400.

From this it seems that we can not connect John as an Essene. Even if John's asceticism could have been directly connected with theirs very little would be settled for this was the place where Christ's mode of life differed from his. Even his disciples noticed the contrast for "Then come to him the disciples of John, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?' " (Matthew 9:14.) "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a demon. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!' " (Matthew 11:18,19) Thus it is shown that even if John had been proven to be an Essene it would in no way have connected Jesus with their number.

James the Brother of Jesus.

James, the brother of Jesus, was the leader of the early church at Jerusalem. It is thought that because of his close kinship, association with and keen understanding of Jesus his beliefs were a good thermometer for those of Jesus. "James ---- lived, a veritable Essene, the life of a monk and ascetic.

Christianity, therefore, drew from Essenism for a short time before Jesus and immediately after the death of Jesus." * Hegesippus tells us that James is reported to have been born holy. He "abstained from flesh, wine and strong drink, and the bath; that he allowed no razor to touch his head, no oil to touch his body, and that he wore only fine linen(which was the dress of the Essenes)." ** For the most part this is a description of Nazarite practices and of Essene tendencies also. James "lived strictly according to the Law, and was indignant when the Christians allowed themselves to transgress it." *** Those who conclude from this that James was an Essene must hold that all Jews of the time were either Pharisees, Sadducees, or Essenes, and all who showed any asceticism belonged to the latter sect. Even at that Hegesippus gives information which would tend to wreck his own contention. He tells us that James abstained from the bath which for the Essenes was of such great importance.

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* Klausner, J., Jesus of Nazareth, p 211.

** Hegesippus in Euseb. H.E. ii 23, Niven, W.D., "Essenes" in Dictionary of Apostolic Church, Vol.I, p 368.

*** Graetz, H., History of the Jews, p 169.

"The historical James shows Pharisaic but not Essene sympathies." * "This is true of James, as it is true of the early disciples in the Mother Church of Jerusalem generally." ** These early disciples had no scruples against the temple ritual, which was daily sacrifices. They recognized destruction of meats in that the Law classified some as unclean and others clean. They abhorred sacrifices which had been offered to idols. They took part in common life and held religious offices. The only difference between them and the orthodox Jews was in their faith in a higher truth and the joy of a better hope. They flourished on Judaistic soil. Therefore we conclude with Niven that "there is no evidence at all for the identification of James with the Essenes." ***

The Early Christian Church.

According to the beliefs of DeQuincey, the Essenes were early Christian monks. Ginsburg pictures Christianity as a development of Essenism and he represented Christ as a member of the holy Order. Graetz says: "The sole historical fact we possess is that

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* Lipsius, Schenkel's Bibel-Lexicon, p 191, Lightfoot, J.B., The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p 408.

** Lightfoot, J.B., The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, p 408.

*** Niven, W.D., "Essenes" in Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, p 368.

Christianity arose out of Essenism." * "Essenism is in agreement with Christianity." ** "We may almost go to the length of saying, with some confidence, that whatever of primitive Christianity is not derivable from Pharisaism may be sought for in Essenism." *** "Christianity, which came from Nazareth, was really an offshoot of the sect of the Essenes, and inherited the aversion of that sect for the Pharisaic laws by which the life of the people was regulated." ****

Jesus, the "son of David, had advanced the kingdom of heaven because he taught men to live modestly and in poverty, like the Essenes, from whose midst, in fact, Christianity had sprung. From their contempt of riches and preference for poverty they bore the name Ebionites. ---- Fearing to be eclipsed by the other party, the primitive Jewish Christian community sent out messages to the foreign communities, in order to impress on them not only the Messianic character of Jesus, but also the duty which they owed to the Law.

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* Klausner, J., Jesus of Nazareth, p 110.

** Niven, W.D., "Essenes" in Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, p 568.

*** Klausner, J., Jesus of Nazareth, p 211 f.

**** Graetz, H., History of the Jews, p 171

Thus they founded Judaeo-Christian colonies, of which that at Rome in time became the chief." *

St. Paul in writing to the Romans mentions Christian practices which may have been due to Essene influences. Among these are: "One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs." (Romans 14:2); and, "It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." (Romans 14:21)

While these resemblances are numerous, the differences are just as pronounced. Peter and John went into the temple to pray (cf Acts 3:1), while the Essenes retired from the world and avoided the temple. The views of Essenism on the body, sun-worship and magic present just as sharp a contrast with Christianity. Judaistic Christianity at first adhered to the Law, but with the growth of a more definite conception of the Person of Christ, the keeping of the law went into the background while Christology became a matter of supreme importance for the church. The temporary communism of the early chapters of Acts remind us of that of the

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* Graetz, H., History of the Jews, p 171.

Essenes, although the Christians were a brotherhood and not an order. The property was voluntarily given by the Christians and was not necessary for the recognition as a brother. Peter asked Ananias: "While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?"(Act 5:4.) The communism of Christianity is easily explained by their belief in an early or almost an immediate return of the Lord. Paul recommended celibacy as a council of perfection because of their belief in the nearness of the end of time. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman". (I Corinthians 7:1) "It is good for them (the unarried and widows) if they abide even as I". (I Corinthians 7:8)

The Essene substitution of a sacramental for a sacrificial worship is paralleled in Christianity by Christian baptism and baptismal regeneration. The Essene common meal is a parallel for the Christian love-feast and perhaps the Eucharist. The Essenes not allowing strangers at their common meal is paralleled by Christian Catechumens retiring before the Eucharist. They each held the same belief in baptism or bathing, power of prophecy, aversion to marriage, system of organization, and the same rules for traveling.

The Essenes can be numbered among those who helped prepare the way for a new world-religion. They placed love to God, to goodness and to man, as articles in their programs and also tried in a wonderful way to realize them in their lives. For this reason Christianity was bound to dissolve them.*

"Many scholars, and especially Graetz, have wished to see in Christianity a purely Essene movement. This is not true. Jesus' object was not to form a community of solitaires, nor, as we shall see later, did he consistently practice monasticism and asceticism. Furthermore, even the early Nazarenes were not Jewish nationalists as were the Essenes, for whereas the latter played their part in the war between Judaea and Rome, the former fled from Jerusalem to Pella, beyond the Jordan." ** After the fall of Jerusalem the Essenes were disorganized and scattered, at this time many of them, no doubt, went to Pella where they united with the Christians and thus had some influence upon the Church from that time on.

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* cf Jülicher, A., "Essenes" in Encyclopaedia Biblica, Vol.II, Column 1400.

** Klausner, J., Jesus of Nazareth, p 211.

"The Christians seek to save the soul of the individual. The Essenes sought to save the community by social means." * "We may hold that the early Church cannot be proved to have owed anything to Essenism, and can be explained without it." ** We may then conclude that "the only true similarity between Essenism and Christianity lay in the common element of true Judaism. Nationally, however, the Essenes occupy the same position as that to which John the Baptist was personally called. They mark the close of an old, the longing for the new, but in this case without the promise. In place of the message of the coming Kingdom they could proclaim only individual purity and isolation." *** "In the history of the infant church for the first quarter of a century Essenism is as though it were not." **** "From the nature of the case Essenism in its extreme form could exercise very little influence on Christianity. In all its practical bearings it was diametrically opposed to the apostolic teachings." *****

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* Klausner, J., Jesus of Nazareth, p 211.

** Niven, W.D., "Essenes" in Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, Vol.I, p 368.

*** Westcott, B.F., "Essenes", in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol.I, p 773.

**** Niven, W.D., "Essenes" in Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, Vol. I, p 368.

***** Westcott, B.F., "Essenes" in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol.I, p 773.

In our attempt to find a close relationship between Essenism and Christianity through history we have found: (1) John the Baptist was an ascetic but in all else he differed from the Essenes; (2) James, the brother of Jesus and first leader of the Christian Church, had no Essene features; (3) the early Church, while having some things in its practices similar to those of the Essenes, was far from Essene in its dealings with its followers. Then history does not connect Essenism and Christianity but shows us only the partial likeness of the two. These likenesses are too vague to even suggest that the one copied from the other or was influenced by its followers. It seems more probable that each went back to some common source or sources for their manner of life.

Since history, through the study of Christ, His Apostles, and the early Church, fails to give us any proof or convincing evidence of any close intercourse between Essenism and Christianity, the view that there is such seeks its support in striking coincidences between the doctrines and practices of the Essenes and those which Jesus gave to Christianity. Such a study will be made in the next section of this paper as we make comparison of the sect with the life and teachings of Jesus.

ESSENISM AND JESUS.

If there is any connection between Essenism and Jesus it must be found in the doctrines, practices and life of Jesus. Our failure to find any external connection is of little consequence as compared with this, for without a relationship here all other proof would be of no value. The question before us is not whether Jesus came amid Essene circumstances but how far was he influenced and moulded by them.

"It will hardly be doubted that our Saviour himself belonged to this holy brotherhood. This will especially be apparent, when we remember that the whole Jewish community at the advent of Christ was divided into three parties, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes, and that every Jew had to belong to one of these sects. Jesus who in all things conformed to the Jewish law, and who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and seperate from sinners, would therefore naturally associate Himself with that order of Judaism which was most congenial to His nature." * The writer of this

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* Ginsburg, "Essenes" in Lightfoot, J.B., The Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, pp 297,298.

seemingly has forgotten that many Jews are spoken of as the vulgar herd.* These are distinguished from the disciples of schools and are considered by most scholars as being unattached to any sect. With this knowledge we may see how it could have been possible for Jesus not to have belonged to any sect. Otherwise we might presume that our Lord did belong to one of these sects and since he gave such burning criticism of the Pharisees he was not likely to have been one of their disciples; neither was he a Sadducee for their beliefs were far from his. So by the process of elimination we would have him an Essene. This has been held by many scholars up to almost recent times. Under the influence of such beliefs some have attempted to show that Jesus need not have been an Essene. This is not necessary for us today. "It is no longer necessary to prove that Jesus was not an Essene, and that early Christianity was not Essenic." ** In this statement Moffatt does not say whether Jesus is or is not an Essene. He may be willing to say with others that it makes but little if any difference with his

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* Moffatt, James, "Essenes" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. V, p 400.

** Ibid, p 400

influence and the meaning of his teachings whether he belonged to this sect or another or perhaps was one of the Jews who joined none of them.

Similarities of Essenism and the Teachings of Jesus.

"There can be no difficulty in admitting that Christ and his apostles recognized those principles and practices of the Essenes which were true and useful." * Jesus was always ready to point out the good points in a person, so we feel that he would do the same with a school or community. As he found true and useful principles and practices he would adopt them, whether they came from Jew or Gentile. Those strong principles of Essenism would meet his way of thinking and life, so he incorporated them into his program whether he knew the Essenes or not. "In a certain measure, Jesus had points of resemblance with Essenism." These similarities can easily be shown by setting some of them forth in the form of exhibits.

Brotherly Love.

Both Jesus and the Essenes taught brotherly love.

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* M'Clintock, John, and Strong, James, "Essenes" in Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol.III, p 303.

Jesus taught that it should extend to all regardless of sect or nationality while with the Essenes it was for those of their own sect. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self." * "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you." ** "Love one another even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."*** "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not, love vaunteth/not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.--------- Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love," ****writes the apostle Paul.

"You would not discover among them any maker of arrows, spears, swords, helmets, corselets, or shields, any maker of arms or war-engines, anyone busied in the slightest with military avocations.

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* Matthew 19:19.

** Matthew 5:45.

*** John 15:12,13.

**** I Corinthians 13:4-13.

---------- There is not a single slave among them; all are free and exchange kind offices with each other. They condemn the position of master -------- as impious, since it violates the order of Mother Nature, which gives birth to all alike and rears them as genuine brothers. ---------- As for the love of man, they give proofs of goodwill, impartiality, and indescribable bond of fellowship." * The Essenes also refused to have anything to do with war or the making of arms of warfare.

Poverty and Wealth.

The Essenes respected personal poverty but at the same time worked for their community welfare. Jesus taught that possessions were very sacred although at times very dangerous to the welfare of ones spiritual life. When used as a sacred trust to further the fraternal relationship of men with one another and with God, they are indespensible. But when used

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* Philo, "Quod Omnis Probus Liber" # 12 in Moffatt, James, "Essenes" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.V, pp 396,397.

in a selfish way and at the detriment of ones fellow-men, they are damnable; then poverty is far more desirable from the standpoint of ones spiritual welfare. Jesus saw that riches were very dangerous in the manner in which they were being used in the common practice. Therefore, he taught the great value of poverty, not for poverty's sake but for the soul's enduring life. When possessions take the central position in a man's life God is crowded out. It is far more important for a man to have the correct relationship with God than for him to own any property.

"Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled." * "Now a certain rich man, and he was clothed inpurple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day: and a certain beggar named Lazarus was

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* Luke 6:20,21.

laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table --------- the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died ----- and in Hades he lifted up his eyes ---- and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." * Jesus said to the rich young ruler; "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." ** "It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. --------- It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." *** "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation." **** "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." ***** Jesus,

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* Luke 16:19-23.

**Matthew 19:21.

*** Matthew 19:23,24.

**** Luke 6:24.

***** Luke 12:20,21.

throughout his ministry, condemned the rich and praised, or at least offered hope to, the poor.

Jesus' condemnation of the rich was not because of their riches but because they were the kind of people that they were. He would have condemned a person with these traits just as readily, whether rich or poor. Jesus never condemned a rich man who put first things first. He welcomed the rich Zacchaeus just as heartily as he did the beggar Bartemaeus. He chose as disciples: Matthew, the rich tax collector: James and John, members of the Zebedee fishing firm; and the brothers Peter and Andrew, who were also fishermen. Thus we can see no discrimination against the wealthy in his choosing of his immediate followers. Some of his close friends were comfortably fixed with this world's goods; among them were Mary and Martha, John Mark's family and Zacchaeus. We have no record of his ever asking these to renounce all, so we infer that for them possessions were not dangerous but an aid to better living for righteousness.

The Essenes "despised wealth ------ among them there is no trace of abject poverty or of excessive wealth." * They made it their chief aim to reduce their material wants to the minimum; thus they must necessarily have exalted poverty.

"Whether the teaching of Jesus gave rise to the asceticism of the Ebionites, or whether the Gospel derived its ascetic teaching from the Essenes, the fact remains that poverty in the Gospels is considered to be a passport to the Heavenly Kingdom, whilst riches are the way to perdition." **

Communism.

Jesus and his disciples, we are led to believe, had a common treasury and from this all necessary expenses were met. He, also, taught that his followers should share the necessities of life with others. "Let him that hath two coats give to him that hath none and let him that hath food do in like manner." ***

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* Josephus, B.J., II, viii, # 3, Moffatt, James, "Essenes" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. V, p 397.

** Friedlander, G., Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, p 174.

*** Klausner, J., Jesus of Nazareth, p 245.

The greatest amount of Jesus' public work was the sharing with others those things that he possessed. He desired to get men to see the great value of a sharing life.

The Early Christians gathered together in common places. They may have done so in part for protection or for Christian fellowship, but whatever the motive there was sure to arise the problems of possessions and support. It soon became the habit for each convert to sell all or at least a part of his possessions and give the proceeds from them over to the society. * This surrender of properity on their part was from the beginning to the end a voluntary act, and all property could be with-held without forfeiting the privileges of the brotherhood.

The Essenes owned everything in common and when one would join their society he must turn over to the sect all of his property and wealth. As a member he was required to put into the common treasury all of his earnings or wages.

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* cf Acts 4 and 5.

Traveling.

When Jesus sent his disciples forth on a missionary journey he admonished them to take nothing with them. "Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass for your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff."* Mark records here that they might take a staff. **

Many suggestions have been given that the early Christians took nothing with them when they traveled but procured what things were needed from Christian societies along the way. However, as to this we do not know.

The Essenes carried nothing with them when they traveled save arms for protection. They entered the houses of other Essenes and whatever they needed they were freely given by the society.

Prohibition of Oaths.

Jesus said, "Swear not at all; ------ but let your speech be, Yea, Yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is

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* Matthew 10:9,10.

** cf Mark 6:8.

more than these is of the evil one. "* Jesus would have the word of his followers to be truthful whether they were under oath to tell the truth or not.

The Essenes refused to take oaths for they were truthful men and they maintained that taking an oath was unnecessary. It was far from right even to need to swear, for it was needed only where untruthfulness prevailed.

Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus talked a great deal about the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God. His teaching was based upon His idea of this kingdom. He placed His life , influence and all upon getting men to see the kingdom as He saw it. He taught that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; also that His "kingdom was not of this world."

The Essenes like John helped to herald in the kingdom. They thought it would be ushered in through the righteousness of their ascetism. But they taught that it was at hand.

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* Matthew 5: 34,37.

Conclusions of Resemblances.

These six resemblances are not entirely coherent; for Jesus' teaching while resembling that of the Essenes was different in many points. His te ching of brotherly love led him to do good to all regardless of sect while that of the Essenes was for those of their sect, although they like Jesus would do nothing to harm another. The poverty and communism of Jesus and the early Christians was voluntary and not compulsory as with the Essenes. The Christians'common life was also far more social, unfettered with ordinances and respected individual liberty, while that of the Essenes was of a monastic rule. The traveling without money or raiment amongst the followers of Jesus was for the purpose of a missionary journey while with the Essenes it was upon any trip they might take. While Jesus told his followers to swear not at all, he "frequently emphasizes his statements by the phrase 'Amen, I say to you ------- Amen' in this connexion is simply an oath." * The Essenes regarded their word as being stronger than an oath. So at once we see

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* Friedlander, G., The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, p 60.

that his practice was by no means so strict as that of the Essenes in this matter of taking oaths. Jesus seemed to teach a spiritual Kingdom while the Essenes taught an earthly one. Thus their resemblances are far from connecting the two in their doctrines and practices, and especially will this be noticed as we study the many things in which they differed entirely.

Contrasts of Essenism and the teachings of Jesus.

In studying the Essenes one is drawn to observe their strict observance of certain points of the Mosaic ceremonial law, and / their contrast with the teachings of Jesus.

Observance of the Sabbath.

Some of the words and deeds of Jesus will give the best and most vivid contrast with the practices of the Essenes.

"Jesus went on the sabbath day through the grain fields; and his disciples were hungry and began to pluck ears and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him, Behold, thy disciples

do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath.----
For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath." *

"On another sabbath, he ---- entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man there, and his right hand was withered -------- and he said to the man ----- Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. And Jesus said unto them, I ask you, Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to destroy it?" **

At Bethesda Jesus healed on the sabbath the man who had had an infirmity for thirty-eight years. "So the Jews said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed. But he answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk. --------- The Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work." ***

Josephus tells us that on the sabbath the Essenes were the most scrupulous of any sect of the Jews.

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* Matthew 12:1,2,8.

** Luke 6:6-9.

*** John 5:10-18.

Many of them would remain in bed all day for fear of doing some work. Others spent the day in the place of worship. None of them would venture to do so much as remove a vessel, not even to perform the necessary offices of life.

Washing.

With the Jews, and especially the Essene sect, washing was a religious ceremony, which must be done in a ritualistic fashion. Jesus was criticised for his lack in observing these practices.

"And when they saw that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashen, hands. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently eat not -----) The Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the traditions of the elders but eat their bread with defiled hands? And he said unto them ----- ye hypocrites,----- leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. ----- There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man." *

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* Mark 7:1-15.

"And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first bathed himself before dinner. And the Lord said unto him. Now ye the Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward is full of extortion and wickedness. Ye foolish ones, ------ behold, all things are clean unto you." *

According to Josephus the Essenes washed their whole body in cold water and afterwards, being clean, came to the refectory to dine. After the days work they returned and supped in like manner. ** "After a year's probation (the novice) is admitted to closer intercourse, and the lustral waters in which he participates have a higher degree of purity". *** "It is a custom to wash after it, as if polluted by it." **** "Racked and dislocated, burnt and crushed, and subjected to every instrument of torture ------ to make them eat strange food ----- they were not induced to submit." *****

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* Luke 11:38-41.

** cf. Josephus, B.J., II,viii, #5 in Moffatt, James, "Essenes" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, p 398.

*** Ibid, #7.

**** Ibid, #9.

***** Ibid, # 10.

Avoidance of Strangers.

Their idea of external purity caused the Essenes to avoid all contact with strangers, as if they would communicate ceremonial defilement. They even shrunk from the probationers and lower grades of their own sect. Here again is a great contrast with the teachings of Jesus as he hurls them at the Pharisees but even more applicable to the Essenes.

"He was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples: ----- and the scribes and Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" *

"The Son of Man came, ------- a friend of publicans and sinners!" **

"The Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." ***

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* Mark 2:15,16.

** Matthew 11:19.

*** Luke 15:2.

"They all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner." *

"Behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner; ------- began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee that had bidden him saw it he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner."**

While Josephus says of the Essenes: "After this act of purification they assemble in an apartment of their own, from which all outsiders are excluded; they enter the dining-room pure as they would enter a sacred precinct, and take their seats quietly." ***

Philo tells that on the seventh day they go to the sacred synagogues, "where they sit arranged according to age". Josephus adds to this that they are divided into four classes according to seniority.

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* Luke 19:7.

** Luke 7:37-39.

*** Josephus, B.J., II, viii, #5, in Moffatt, James, "Essenes" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, p 398.

If one of the juniors should touch a senior, the senior would wash as though he had been defiled by some foreigner.

Asceticism.

Great contrasts are shown in the Essene practices and the life of Christ in ascetic dealings, such as: Christ's eating and drinking with those he came in contact with until it was said of him that he was "a gluttonous man, and a winebibber" * ; his presence at the wedding in Canaan of Galilee; and allowing himself to be anointed with oil. The Essenes never ate of more than their one food besides bread and in very moderate amounts; they did not believe in marriage so never attended any such celebrations; they had an aversion for oil and considered it a pollution.

Avoidance of the Temple and its Sacrifices.

Jesus spent much time in the Temple and especially during His sojourns in Jerusalem. In it He performed some of His miracles and much of His teaching was also done in it. It was the common rendezvous for

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* Luke 7:34.

the early Christians. Neither did He show any abhorrence for its sacrifices. He taught that the alter consecrated the gifts; He charged the leper to "go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded." * The Gospels do not give one word which can be construed as Jesus condemning the sacrificial system or suggesting that it be changed or put aside. While this is true with the life of Jesus, the Essenes were just the opposite for they avoided the temple and objected to any kind of an animal sacrifice.

The Resurrection of the Body.

The early Christians believed in the resurrection of the body, and that this great resurrection of the dead would without a doubt come soon. Jesus taught; "the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." ** "Destroy this temple; and in three days I will raise it up." *** "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."****

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*Mark 1:44.

** John 5:28,29.

*** John 2:19.

**** John 11:25,26.

The Essenes distinctly denied the resurrection of the body. They believed in the immortality of the soul, which was imprisoned in the body and given liberty only at death. To them the resurrection was repulsive, as it involved a perpetuation of evil.

Conclusions of the contrasts.

The above six contrasts are by no means the only ones to be found between the life of Jesus and the practices of the Essenes; they are only outstanding examples of the conflicts that existed between them.

In the observance of the sabbath, Jesus would have his followers see that the all important thing was for them to love God and their fellowmen and so to live on the sabbath, as well as the other days, that such a life of love might exist in each of them. Thus His teaching "The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath." * The Essenes made the day one of self-inflicted punishment and strict observance of the Law, for fear of desecrating it. To them man was made for the sabbath.

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* Mark 2:27.

The Essenes put great faith in their external washings, thinking that it would also clean the inner man. Jesus put his faith for cleanliness in his dealings with mankind and the life He lived, even teaching that all things are clean.***

Jesus taught that the very heart of membership of the Kingdom of God was to be a missionary. He, "as a man of the people, deviated from the practice of the Essenes ----- in not shunning contact with the sinners, the Publicans, and in endeavoring to elevate them." * In no way did He ask His followers to sever relations with their fellows. In His view religion could function to the full while people were engaged in their normal activities. He would have His ideals of righteousness realized in everyday living while one was in contact with others. "Jesus' own aggressive manner of life left little opportunity for his followers to assume the inactive attitude of calmly awaiting the divine initiative." ** The Essenes were exactly opposite to this in their life for they would

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* Kohler, Kaufmann, "Christianity in its Relation to Judaism", in Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p 50.

** Case, S.J., Jesus, a New Biography, p 293.

*** Cf. Luke 11:41

have their followers withdraw from all customary pursuits to realize a better righteousness and, as they hoped, to be especially pleasing to God.

The asceticism of the Essenes far outstripped the enactments of the Mosaic law while Jesus was very liberal with the Law at these points. He entered into these phases of life in such a full hearted way that he was able to use these common relationships and actions of the people as basis for many of his parables. "The attitude of Jesus and his disciples is altogether anti-Essene, a denunciation and disavowal of Essene rigor and asceticism; but singularly enough, while the Roman war appealed to men of action such as the Zealots, men of a more peaceful and visionary nature, who had previously become Essene, were more and more attracted by Christianity, and thereby gave the church its otherworldly character." *

It is not known whether the Essenes thought the Temple polluted the sacrifices or the sacrifices the Temple; but they avoided both as a thing of destruction and damnation. Jesus and his disciples

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* Kohler, Kaufmann, "Essenes", in The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol.V, p 232.

found value in the observation of these rites and sacrifices of His people and they participated in them.

Even in doctrinal teaching they could not agree for Jesus seemed to hold to the resurrection of the body, and his disciples put a great deal of emphasis on it, but the Essenes distinctly denied even the possibility of it.

Since the similarities between the beliefs of Essenism and those of Jesus are so vague and disputed and at the same time the contrasts are so outstanding, one must conclude that these similarities are not of sufficient importance to warrant the assumption of any connection between them. The apparent resemblances are to be found only in the higher moral standards of the Essenes. Jesus was ready to accept truth wherever He could find it. He knew the scripture and the teachings of His people. He did not conform in all ways with any school or sect but whatever, in the teaching of each, would help men to be free and to live a bigger life, that was also found in the teachings of Jesus. As to what extent Jesus may have been influenced by the Essene teachings it is hard to say but in all things He seemed to be far from one of them even at times showing more

rese-blance to the Pharisee, whom He so severely condemned.

This evidence shows that it is entirely impossible that Jesus was an Essene or that He took any great number of His principles from their code of life. Even those principles which might have come from them, He could have gotten just as easily from other sources.

SUMMARY.

Judaism was comprised of three sects -- the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and Essenes -- during the last century and a half before the birth of Jesus. The Bible and Rabbinical literature tell us considerable about the two former but neither even so much as mention the latter. Some have claimed this silence to be because Jesus belonged to the sect while others claim it was because of its comparative insignificance.

In order to better find to what extent Jesus was influenced by the Ebionites or Essenes, this study has been divided into three main divisions: first, origin and practice of the Essenes; second, Essenism and Christianity; and third, Essenism and Jesus.

The Essenes probably originated in Palestine at about the same time that the Pharisees and the Sadducees were organized -- approximately the middle of the second century before Christ. They were by far the most ascetic and eccentric of the Jewish

schools. They lived apart from the world in settlements of their own where everything was owned in common. They spent their time endeavoring to attain purity and holiness through observing the law, body cleanliness, and poverty. They were the most strict of all Jews in keeping the Mosaic Law, even going beyond it in some instances. Their sect died out soon after the time of Christ and they were known as the Ebionites for the next few centuries. They never held any great influence over the world because of their seclusive habits.

Many attempts have been made to connect Jesus and Christianity with the Essenes. John the Baptist has been held as an Essene. While he, like them, was an ascetic, his asceticism and theirs were entirely different. His habits of life and teachings were far from those of the sect. Thus in spite of the many claims that have been made, John was not an Essene in practice and teaching.

James, the brother of Jesus and first leader of the Christians, has also been pointed out as a member of this school. If all ascetics were Essenes

then James was one of them. But as there were many ascetics that were not Essenes this evidence does not stand. In his attitude toward the Temple and its daily sacrifices he was in no points like the Essenes. A true portrait of him gives no essential Essene features at all. So it must be concluded that James was not one of them.

Early Christianity showed many features similar to the Essenes, but in each it was more liberal and placed much more faith in Jesus, although after the fall of Jerusalem a goodly number of the Essenes or Ebionites united with the Christians at Pella. However, Christianity received a good deal of influence from them during its plastic years.

The life of Jesus shows some similarities with the Essenes: brotherly love, poverty and wealth, communism, habits in traveling, prohibition of oaths, and teaching about the kingdom of heaven. In each of these we find that Jesus does not agree entirely with this ascetic group, but He and they alike are presenting these important issues in their own ways and with little doubt had no contact with each other at all.

Jesus' teaching also shows some bitter contrasts with their teachings which could never be bridged. Among these some of the more prominent are: rules of sabbath observance; habits of washing and ceremonial cleanliness; treatment of strangers, especially of a different sect or nationality; ascetic practices; attitude toward the Temple and its sacrifices and ritual; belief in the resurrection of the body.

Whereas the heralder of Christ and the heralder of Christianity, one the cousin and the other the brother of Christ, were neither one an Essene or greatly influenced by the order; and whereas the beginnings of Christianity during the first half century was not of the Essene order, although it had some resemblances to the order; and furthermore, whereas no resemblances in Jesus' practice or doctrine can be found to justify the connecting of Jesus with the Essenes, it must be concluded that Jesus was not an Essene and his doctrines, practices, and teachings were not borrowed from them nor particularly indebted to them.

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